

***DRAFT Riverdale Neighborhood Plan***



*Hazel Rogers, Bill Spurzem's Mother, taken October, 1922  
Photo courtesy of Bill Spurzem*

**1/03/2008**  
*(Board of County Commission Approved)*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **AUTHORIZATION**

The Montana Code Annotated (76-1-601(4)(a), MCA) provides the framework for the development of neighborhood plans. The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan has been prepared in compliance with the statutory criteria and is consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the Flathead County Growth Policy, adopted March 19, 2007.

The Flathead County Growth Policy provides a range of planning and development actions. Consisting of 50 broad goals and 265 more specific policies, the growth policy is a framework document intended on guiding growth and development within the unincorporated portion of Flathead County. The policy lays out procedures in addressing neighborhood plans and supports a bottom-up approach to planning at the local level.

The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan incorporates 27 growth policy goals and more than 30 of its policies. <sup>1</sup>

## **BACKGROUND**

Flathead County has experienced unprecedented growth in the last several decades, more than doubling the number of residents in the county between 1970 and 2000<sup>1</sup>. Recently, much of this growth has occurred within the incorporated cities of Columbia Falls, Kalispell, and Whitefish. As these cities have increased in population, the demand for developable land has resulted in an increased jurisdictional area for Columbia Falls and Whitefish, as well as an expansion of city limits through annexation for the city of Kalispell.

Expanding city limits have implications for development just beyond their boundaries, where a demand may increase particularly for residential uses offering housing within close proximity to jobs, and goods and services. The most recent Kalispell Growth Policy Future Land Use Map dated August of 2006 shows the potential for the city to expand into the Riverdale neighborhood planning boundaries. As the planning process, described in the following section, was undertaken, approximately 525 acres comprising a majority of the southeast portion of the original Riverdale neighborhood plan was removed from the planning area because 325 acres were annexed into the City of Kalispell. The balance of the property (200 acres) has also been annexed into the city.

Although the majority of the land within the Riverdale plan area is currently undeveloped and agricultural in nature, the potential for uncoordinated planning on a per property basis increases as development pressures continue to increase in the area and landowners seek to develop their land. As the pattern of development within the vicinity of the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan boundaries has begun to shift, the Riverdale residents have come together to create a comprehensive plan for future growth to promote efficient and coordinated development in their neighborhood plan area.

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, 2000

## **PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY**

The revised neighborhood plan boundaries encompass approximately 3,053 acres of land. The approximate location of the neighborhood plan is directly south of the Flathead County Landfill. The planning area is bordered by Clark Drive to the south; U.S. Highway 93 to the east; and West Spring Creek Road and Fox Farm Road to the west. The neighborhood boundaries and general vicinity are shown on Map 1 (Neighborhood Vicinity).

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

A group of 11 landowners organized in the fall of 2004 to begin forming a land use plan for an area north of the City of Kalispell now referred to as Riverdale. A private architecture and engineering firm was hired by the landowners to assist in the process. As the neighborhood plan proceeded through the review process public workshop meetings were held on September 27, 2005 and October 11, 2005. A resident questionnaire was also prepared and distributed to all land owners within the planning area to solicit neighborhood interest and input into the plan.

Public hearings were held by the West Valley Land Use Advisory Committee on February 28, 2006, the Flathead County Planning Board on May 11, 2006, and the Flathead County Commissioners on May 30, 2006 prior to their making decisions regarding the Riverdale Plan. Public comments, both written and verbal, outlined a number of concerns with the proposed plan. At that time the Board of County Commissioners decided to remand the Riverdale Plan back to the Planning Board in order to hold public workshops and public hearings. After the decision of the County Commissioners, those residents within the Riverdale Neighborhood planning boundaries held dozens of meetings, inviting public participants and groups to attend and participate.

Based on the comments received during the public hearings, written comments, and the meetings held by the landowners within the plan, Riverdale residents along with a privately retained planner, neighbors and Flathead County planning staff have collaborated on the creation of this document.

The draft neighborhood plan became available for public review on June 12, 2007. On June 26, 2007 and July 17, 2007 staff and planning area neighbors held public workshops at the Majestic Valley Arena. The planning board also held a public workshop on July 25, 2007 to satisfy Growth Policy procedures for new neighborhood plans.

The West Valley Land Use Advisory Committee reviewed the revised plan on July 24, 2007. On November 27, 2007 the Flathead County Planning Board reviewed the draft plan and made revisions it considered necessary to further the County's goal of building "a foundation for safe and healthy growth that preserves Flathead County's most valued characteristics".<sup>1</sup> On January 3, 2008 the County Commission approved a Resolution of Intent in support of the draft plan.

<sup>1</sup> Flathead County Growth Policy (Page 1)

## RIVERDALE NEIGHBORHOOD VISION

*“To develop a neighborhood that integrates residential, commercial, and open space and recreational uses which effectively function together, emphasizing and protecting the natural amenities and features of the land.”*

The residents within Riverdale seek to provide a guide for future development of what is currently a predominantly agricultural landscape. Future land use designations in the plan include a mixture of residential, commercial, and open space and recreational uses. Much of the land within the Riverdale plan is owned by farmers who, like many others in their profession, are finding it difficult to continue to farm. This Plan has been produced from the desire of these landowners to have a say in the future development of their lands.

The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan is intended to create a strategy for development that will ensure as development occurs, the amenity base will be protected throughout the neighborhood and that development will be of high quality and encourage efficient public services. It is the goal and intent of the residents within the Riverdale neighborhood to create a plan which will recognize the value of the amenities and natural features within the planning boundaries. By creating a neighborhood plan, property owners within the neighborhood can set a course to preserve those most valued amenities within the neighborhood at the time of future development and guide growth so as to promote an efficient use of the land.

The 2007 Flathead County Growth Policy identifies view shed protection as one of seven elements of the “Public’s Vision”. In keeping with the character of the planning area, the visual integrity of the neighborhood is an important consideration in this neighborhood plan. Creative design is stressed in many of the plan policies. The concept of tying innovative and excellent design at the time of development, typically through Planned Unit Developments, will create incentives for development through alternative site design and modified infrastructure requirements.



## SECTION 1

### EXISTING CONDITIONS & FUTURE PROJECTIONS

To establish a baseline understanding of the Riverdale neighborhood and to project future growth within the neighborhood, the following sections on population, economy, housing, land use, natural environment, transportation, land ownership, and local and public facilities provide an overview of existing conditions in the planning area to create a foundation and to project trends for planning for the future of the neighborhood.

#### PART 1: POPULATION

Flathead County's population has experienced growth at a fairly constant rate of approximately 2% increase each year since 2000. The majority of residents in Flathead County, roughly 69%, reside outside of the incorporated cities of Columbia Falls, Kalispell, and Whitefish<sup>1</sup>. The Riverdale Neighborhood is located in a "growth triangle" between these cities (see Map 1: Neighborhood Vicinity). The city of Kalispell, which is the southernmost boundary of the Riverdale neighborhood, is the largest city in the county, with 21% of the county's population located within the city limits and a growth rate of approximately 4% per year since 2000<sup>1</sup>. The location of Riverdale is in an area where there is a growth trend and the desirability of new residents to live within close proximity to jobs, goods and services.

Approximately 37 persons reside within the Riverdale neighborhood comprising 9 households equating to an average of 2.5 persons per household. According to local residents, population growth has been considerably slow within the planning area, with limited residential development occurring along Prairie View Road over the past 20 years. The growth rate within the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan area is significantly slower than the county-wide growth rates of the present era. Much of this can be attributed to the predominance of large farms.

#### Population - Future Projections

The projected population for the entire Flathead County to the Year 2025 is based on trends established from existing population data. The projected population for 2025 is 111,740 persons, representing an increase of 37,269 people from the 2000 population<sup>2</sup>. The projection shows that the total population is likely to increase by nearly 50%. Based on existing natural change and net migration, this projected population will be due primarily to net migration and to a lesser extent by natural change. Predicted future growth of this magnitude has significant implications for the demand for new housing, jobs, and increased demands on public services and facilities.

Assuming a build-out over the next 20 years, population within the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan area can be expected to increase from the current 37 residents to somewhere between a range of 6,218 and 10,648 residents, based on an assumption of 2.5 persons per household. The actual future population will be influenced by public service and utility availability, local demand for housing, and annexation practices of the City of Kalispell. Straight line population absorption projections on an annual basis result in population increases of about 422 new residents each year. The demographic profile of new residents will be reflected by the type of housing product, timing and other market conditions. At build out, the overall population density per square mile potentially will result in about 1,757 people, which is low overall density. Another way to visualize the average spatial population would be a home per acre across the plan area.

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<sup>2</sup> NPI Data Services, Montana County Projections, 2001

## **PART 2: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Rapid population growth, as well as the character of neighborhoods, has been the major driver in the economic vitality of the entire valley. Flathead County has witnessed a decrease in primary sectors such as agriculture and timber industries and an increase in the service sectors, including healthcare, financial, and real estate services. The area's natural environment is one of its chief economic assets contributing significantly to the high quality of life characterized by natural scenic beauty, clean air and water and access to outdoor and recreational opportunities. The county's growing population fueled mainly by in-migration is a sign of the area's attractiveness and confirmation that the quality of life is a major economic asset.

A limited number of existing businesses are located within the neighborhood plan area including a boat storage facility, an antique store, an arena, a motor race track, and agriculturally-related businesses including agricultural and commercial storage, and a feed business. The majority of landowners within the planning boundaries operate agricultural activities on their lands; these include raising crops such as alfalfa, wheat, barley, peas, and mint, and to a much lesser extent raising various types of livestock including cattle and poultry. These operations are typically seasonal and employ a minimal number of full time employees.

### **Economic Conditions – Future Projections**

In the future as the Riverdale area transitions from agriculture to predominantly residential land uses, neighborhood and general commercial areas will be necessary. These neighborhood commercial areas reduce vehicle trips to Kalispell and Whitefish, provide needed goods and services such as those offered by banks, small-scale grocery shops and drug stores, and create places for community interaction. Neighborhood scale commercial and general commercial helps enhance neighborhood character, fosters a neighborhood identity, and a neighborhood feel.

General commercial development of a size and scale to support on-going activities within the neighborhood should be located on or near Highway 93. Current upgrades to Highway 93 including the expansion of the roadway width and installation of an interchange will make access and circulation optimal in this area. General commercial development should complement the existing development in the area and not be of a strip mall or strip development type design. Goals and policies addressing commercial development within the neighborhood are detailed in Section II.

## **PART 3: HOUSING**

Currently, there are 15 single-family homes located within the Riverdale planning area. Over the past 20 years approximately 10 additional single family residences have been built. The majority of the housing in the area is tied to agricultural land and farming activities.

The average home value in Flathead County increased 116.4% between 1990 and 2000, more than doubling the cost of the average house while the average household income increased by 42.7% over the same period of time. The availability of affordable housing close to goods, services, and jobs further reduces household expenditures on transportation and decreases the cost of providing public services to those homes. Housing that costs no more than 30% of the household's gross annual income is nationally considered affordable<sup>3</sup>.

Public comments made during the planning process have urged the incorporation of affordable

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<sup>3</sup> US Department of Housing and Urban Development

housing policies that include provisions for multi-family housing which incorporate duplexes, town homes, and apartments. The development of new housing units should occur in a fashion that ensures efficient public services to the new residents and adequate public infrastructure to serve the new developments. Areas that may be designated for higher density residential or mixed use will require public infrastructure availability such as municipal or public sewer and water to serve the area proposed for development.

### **Housing - Future Projections**

Given the low residential density anticipated within the neighborhood, the total housing units are estimated to range from 2,487 to 4,259 dwelling units. The total residential dwelling units is fairly evenly split between single family homes on lots equal to or greater than one acre (2,000 dwelling units) and mixed use at an average of six residential units per acre (1,368 dwelling units) providing some form of balance to the housing mix. The plan recommends that between 328 and 1,313 single family homes be constructed on 1,641 acres, with lot sizes averaging 2.5 acres or greater. A range of 1,690 to 2,681 housing units are estimated to be constructed on one acre or smaller lots depending upon Planned Unit Development and/or subdivision approval. Housing can also be expected in the Mixed Use land use category; this plan assumes an average of six (6) dwelling units per acre within this land use category, totaling approximately 1,368 residential housing units on 228 acres. Specific development intensities in the Mixed Use land use category may be increased with the creation of a neighborhood public water and sewer district or annexation into a municipal water and sewer district. Dwelling units within the Mixed Use category will be comprised primarily of apartments, owner occupied condominiums, town-homes, and small lot residential in contrast to the large residential estate lots which will be characterized by single family dwellings. Housing characteristics will be driven by market demand. The use of Planned Unit Developments and/or clustering developments could significantly increase the number of housing units.

Clustering homes on smaller lots, while maintaining the overall density of the land use category and maximizing open space may become advantageous for developers and provide a more flexible approach to capturing market demand. Subdivisions which utilize clustering to protect valuable natural or agricultural land and provide open space will be eligible for increased densities. Currently the planning area contains four subdivisions. Patterson Tracts is located just north of the intersection of Church Drive and Hwy. 93. Harvest View Estates is located north of Church Drive and west of the intersection of Church Drive and Stillwater Road and has received preliminary plat approval. Barrel Hed is located approximately one mile north of Church Drive on Prairie View Road. One other subdivision is located on Prairie View Road east of the Barrel Hed subdivision.

Based on a 20 year build-out projection, approximately 169 new homes would be built each year. A combination of mixed-use condominiums and apartments can be expected to accompany the larger lot single family homes. The actual number of homes constructed annually will depend on market demands and land owner desires.

### **PART 4: LAND USE**

Current land uses within the Riverdale Neighborhood can be assigned one of the following three land type designations: rural residential, agricultural, or specialty use. Map 2 (Existing Land Types) shows the existing land uses within the neighborhood based on these categories.

In addition to the above land type designations, approximately 75 acres within the neighborhood are used for roads or are occupied by streams or the Stillwater River. Presently, a conservation easement has been established on 240 acres of contiguous land located along Church Drive, as shown in Map 2 (Existing Land Types), to perpetually preserve a portion of agricultural lands. All of the land within the conservation easement continues to be actively farmed. Conservation easements and agricultural management plans, discussed in Section VI: Implementation, is a useful method to preserve a landscape and to allow the opportunity for land to be continued to be farmed. Existing land use and intensities of use are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Existing Land Use**

Land Use	Description	Approximate Acreage
Agricultural	Wheat, alfalfa, mint, peas, barley, livestock, feed business, storage	2,743
Specialty Use	Arena, race track, antique store, commercial storage	105
Rural Residential	Single-family homes, residential subdivisions	205

Land uses within the plan area have not experienced significant change over the past decades with the exception of the development of the arena, which has become a regional venue for entertainment and events, and the race track which also draws visitors from the greater region for events. Although some subdivision of land has taken place in the past and more recently, the majority of the land has remained intact in large tracts. As is outlined in the Neighborhood Vision statement, residents in the Riverdale Neighborhood seek to plan for residential and commercial development within the neighborhood. Industrial uses, other than industry and warehousing surrounding the Flathead County Landfill, are not consistent and conflict with the residential vision of the planning area.

#### **Land Use Considerations: Internal Land Uses**

The Riverdale planning area is characterized by agricultural land uses with seven active farming operations ranging in size from 20 acres to 1340 acres. Residents in the Riverdale planning area recognize that farming will continue to be an active industry, way of life, and an activity which defines the character of Flathead County; however the intent of preparing this plan is to provide guidance for future development of the agricultural land as it becomes less viable to farm in the nature and at the scale currently practiced in the neighborhood. According to a recent survey conducted by Cenex Harvest States, a large portion of those farmers who are currently farming land in Flathead County plan to retire in the next five to ten years. Agricultural land uses have characterized the area since the first permanent settlements in the valley, and remain a dominant land use type in the county. However, fewer people are drawing their main income from farming. In 2002, over half of the farms in the county had annual sales of less than \$2,500, indicating a number of hobby farms or farms used to supplement incomes<sup>4</sup>. Light industrial uses surrounding the Flathead County Landfill are consistent with the residential vision of the planning area.

Riverdale residents anticipate the need to change the nature of land use within the neighborhood over time due to: 1) population changes; 2) development pressures; 3) anticipated residential

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Agriculture, 2002 Census of Agriculture

growth resulting in the cities of Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls extending towards each other; and, 4) the decreasing feasibility of farming at the historical scale and extent. The proposed Riverdale Neighborhood Plan represents a comprehensive, long-term vision for the future of this land.

#### **Land Use Considerations: External Uses**

Outside of the neighborhood planning boundaries, two separate land uses located within close proximity to the Riverdale neighborhood warrant attention, as shown in Map 3 (External Land Uses). The Flathead County Landfill is located directly to the north of the Riverdale neighborhood. This landfill serves the entire county and the three cities. The Flathead County Solid Waste District provided input regarding the Riverdale Plan. The district has recommended a 1,320 foot land use transitional area from landfill boundaries to be designated so that future expansion of the landfill operations will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare. This designation is shown on Map 9 (Future Land Use). The Riverdale neighborhood believes that the landfill should acquire its own internal transition area to complement the Landfill Transition land use area of the plan.

The second land use external to the planning area is sand and gravel operations. Sand and gravel mining operations are located south and west; outside of the neighborhood planning boundaries. These active mining operations have had an impact on the West Valley community.

As the planning process has been undertaken to create this neighborhood plan, a significant portion of the original plan has been removed due to its annexation into the City of Kalispell. Approximately 525 acres comprising the southeast corner of the original planning area may become developed at a higher density than what is anticipated in this plan. Of that area, 325-acres along the south side of Church Drive and U.S. Highway 93 have been approved as a mixed-use subdivision. Although Map 9 (Future Land Use) indicates that this area is no longer part of the Riverdale plan, it is pertinent that the development of this land be acknowledged as it has potential implications for the development of lands within the Riverdale area. The development, at the time of creating this plan, includes 586 residential units, 12 neighborhood commercial lots, two lots to be dedicated to the Kalispell Fire Department, and 19.6 acres of open space. Church Drive will be the primary access point for traffic generated by this development. Annexing this land into the City of Kalispell is coupled with the required extension of the sanitary sewer mains and water mains to the area. Extension of these facilities dramatically reduces the cost of nearby property owners to extend and connect to these mains, creating potential incentives for areas within the plan to propose annexation into the city.

#### **Future Land Use Map**

The Future Land Use Map (Map 9) shows relative locations of anticipated land uses and development patterns in the planned area, which reflect the planning area's character, and the Riverdale Neighborhood vision and goals. The future land use map was prepared using a layered composite of the existing land type, appropriate land uses and then assigning intensities and densities to specific uses. The resulting map shows a predominately small and large parcel residential neighborhood, coupled with business and neighborhood commercial land use categories. A Mixed Use land use category, which blends general commercial with residential uses, is identified along the U.S. Highway 93 corridor. The transitional area surrounding the Flathead County Landfill is based on the need to encourage compatible land uses adjacent to the existing public landfill use.

The Stillwater River provides a natural transition for planning purposes, and the presence of the river facilitates less intense residential development in the western portion of the planning area where transportation and services are currently less available. Additionally, as public infrastructure and facilities extend northward, it is anticipated that growth will also occur spatially from south to north. With the future residential development anticipated west of the river, development of a limited commercial country corner or neighborhood commercial services may be necessary. A local convenience store, professional offices or other compatible neighborhood-scale uses would provide nearby residences with the nearby convenience of necessary goods and services and would reduce the need for increased vehicle trips to Kalispell to shop.

The area east of the Stillwater River provides a greater opportunity to develop at greater intensities that complement the annexed area to the south. U.S. Highway 93 provides the highway transportation and access. Also, the intersection of Church and Highway 93 is scheduled in 2008 for major transportation improvements, including a grade separated crossing. Commercial uses are expected on the northwest corner of U.S. 93 and Church Drive due to proximity to the major highway. Table 2 identifies the future Land Use categories designated within the plan, and the projected dwelling unit and populations. These Land Use categories are described in Section III.

**Table 2**  
**Future Land Use and Projected Build-Out\***

Land Use Type	Acres	Dwelling Units*	Population*
Residential Low (1du/1 ac)	787	787 – 1,574	1,968 – 3,935
Residential Suburban(1 du/2.5 to 1 d.u./5 acres)	1,641	328 – 1,313	820 – 3,283
Mixed Use (Ave. 6du/ acre)	228	1,368	3,420
Neighborhood Commercial – Light Business	12	-	-
Landfill Transition Area	89	4	10
Conservation Easement	240	-	-
Park Area	56	-	-
Total	3,053	2,487 – 4,259	6,218 – 10,648

\* Range Based on average to maximum development density (assumes PUD for maximum)

## **PART 5: NATURAL RESOURCES & WATER QUALITY**

The Riverdale area is primarily characterized by two landscape types: agricultural, as discussed in the previous sections, and natural. The Stillwater River flows through the neighborhood, from the northwest corner and runs diagonally through the planning area to the southern boundary.

The presence of the Stillwater River, ponds, and wetland areas, as shown in Map 4 (Environmental Features), attract a variety of wildlife. The riparian and wetland habitats provide habitat to white-tailed deer, hawks, falcons, ducks, geese, pheasant, owls, fox, turkeys, coyotes, woodpeckers, grouse, and very rarely Canadian lynx, black bear, and elk. Mapping provided by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks indicates that the river corridor is winter range for white-tailed deer. With the presence of an abundant food source, a mix of crops and natural

vegetation, for several wildlife species, and the river corridor and approximately 140 acres of wetland and riparian areas, the area provides an ideal natural habitat.

The Stillwater River is currently categorized as an “impaired” waterway as per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. A waterway is categorized as impaired because it cannot support one or more of its designated uses. The ‘impaired’ designation was initially assigned in 1996, when levels of several pollutants, including nutrients, pathogens, and silt, exceeded state standards. In 2004, the Stillwater River showed levels of nitrates, nutrients, phosphorous, and silt. The primary source of pollutants in the river is unknown; the river has been historically known by residents to have a naturally elevated sediment load<sup>5</sup>. Minimal development has occurred in the neighborhood; future development should be designed to prevent degradation of the river.<sup>6</sup>

Wetlands and riparian areas offer many benefits such as the ability to maintain and improve water quality, to increase aquifer recharge, to provide for natural flood and erosion control, and to create wildlife habitats. In addition, wetland and riparian areas are sometimes located within the 100-year flood plain, including the area located along the Stillwater River. Development in the 100-year flood plain is limited locally by County regulations due to the risk of flooding in these areas and the impact of altering the flood plain. An approximation of the 100-year flood plain is shown on Map 4 (Environmental Features).

A method to protect water quality by protecting wetland and riparian areas is to develop outside these areas, and furthermore to establish vegetated transitional areas between development and these natural resources. Vegetated transitions minimize impact of development upon streams, rivers and wetlands. Some benefits include maintaining and improving water quality, flood and erosion control, wildlife habitat protection, and maintaining and enhancing the character of an area. Several goals and policies have been established to mitigate the impact of development within Riverdale on the natural resources.

Although the majority of the land cover within the neighborhood is herbaceous, consisting of either native grasses or crops, some stands of mature timber dot the landscape. Due to the agricultural nature of the area, much of the tree cover is located along the Stillwater River.

## **PART 6: TRANSPORTATION**

U.S. Highway 93 North, the major north-south highway route through the western part of the state, creates the easternmost boundary of the Riverdale Neighborhood. U.S. Highway 93 is a major arterial that conveys local traffic throughout the county, as well as interstate and international traffic. The segment of U.S. Highway 93 located along the neighborhood boundary is currently under construction as a four lane divided highway.

There are currently five approved approaches onto U.S. Highway 93 within the planning area. McDermott Road accesses seven properties, including the motor raceway. An approved, but not utilized, approach permit is located at the intersection of the highway and Schrade Road. In addition, Majestic Valley Arena has secured two legal approach permits from Montana Department of Transportation, which are used to access the arena. A fifth existing access is at

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<sup>5</sup> Montana Department of Environmental Quality Clean Water Act Information Center, Summary Report Stillwater River - MT6P001\_0101 - Flathead Watershed, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Montana Department of Environmental Quality & Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead Basin Program: Quality Assurance Project Plan, August 2005.

Church Drive, which is scheduled in 2008 to be improved to a grade separated junior interchange. No new accesses onto U.S Highway 93 are proposed under this plan. Access points to U.S. Highway 93 are shown on Map 5 (Transportation Network).

County and private roads located within Riverdale are listed in Table 3. In addition to these roads, several unnamed roads are located in the neighborhood, providing access to a minor number of properties. Roads outside of the neighborhood but providing access to properties within the neighborhood include: West Reserve Drive, West Valley Drive, Spring Prairie Road, and KM Ranch Road. Map 5 (Transportation Network) provides an overview of the road system serving the neighborhood.

**Table 3**  
**Roads Providing Direct Access Within the Neighborhood**

Road Name	Easement Width (feet)	Driving Surface	Classification	Ownership
Church Drive	60	Paved	Collector	County
Clark Drive	60	Gravel	Collector	County
Fox Farm Road	60	Gravel	Local	County
Harvest View Lane	60	Paved	Local	Private
McDermott Road	60	Paved	Local	County
Prairie View Road	60	Paved/Gravel	Local	County
Prairie View Way	60	Gravel	Local	Private
W. Spring Creek Road	40	Gravel	Local	County
Stillwater Road	60	Gravel	Collector	County

The County Road and Bridge Department conducts traffic counts for county roads with the most recent traffic counts conducted between 2003 and 2005. Traffic counts for county roads which are part of the transportation network serving Riverdale are provided in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**  
**Traffic Counts for Selected Roads\***

Road Name	Average Daily Trips*
Church Dr	582
Clark Dr	18
Fox Farm Rd	51.5
KM Ranch Rd	337
Prairie View Rd	210.5
W. Spring Creek Rd	94
Spring Prairie Rd	379
Stillwater Rd	395
West Valley Dr.	397.5

Averages are based on traffic counts conducted for the portions of roads providing access to Riverdale

\*Road counts are using the most recent data available, typically since 2003.

The neighborhood does not expect Flathead County to improve the roads to accommodate the anticipated growth in the plan. Landowners that elect to develop their property have an



obligation to fully mitigate, at their own expense, the impacts that the change of land use has on the planning area and adjacent areas. It is not expected that Church Drive, even with the improved intersection at U.S. Highway 93 will be able to adequately handle the increased traffic proposed in this plan. Future residents are likely to choose alternative routes towards their destinations.

### **Transportation – Future Projections**

As commercial and residential development occur within Riverdale, it is inevitable that the roads serving the neighborhood will experience increased traffic volumes. Necessary upgrades to local public roads, including resurfacing and widening, the dedication of new road easements, and building of new roads to permit efficient and safe traffic flows, are anticipated. In order to ensure that an adequate road and transportation network is available as the neighborhood develops planned extensions of and improvements to the road network may be necessary. Map 5 (Transportation Network) details the existing road system serving Riverdale. New roads and road extensions should complement the current transportation system, and maintain or reduce the number of individual accesses onto US Highway 93. Residents acknowledge that the improvement and extension of the road network to serve new developments will be the responsibility of those choosing to develop their lands, and will be addressed at the time of development. Those roads to be designated as arterials in the future, as identified in the Flathead County Growth Policy, will require an 80-foot easement to be dedicated to permit for expansion of the existing roadways. The Flathead County Transportation Plan, expected next Fall, 2008, could result in the identification of additional collector and arterial roads in the planning area. Any additional roads from that plan will need to be reflected on Map 5 (Transportation Network).

The growth policy provides a framework for future arterial and collector road connections. Within the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan area Stillwater/Prairie View and West Spring Creek/Fox Farm Road alignments are identified as future arterial road improvements, which will require an 80 foot road easement. Both these alignments would enable better north-south traffic flows. Church Drive is recognized as a future arterial to meet west-east traffic needs. The Clark/Wild Pine Drive road alignment has been identified as a collector road, requiring a 60 foot road easement along the southern boundary of the planning area. It is anticipated those additional collector roads, although not specifically identified on Map 5 (Riverdale Transportation Network) will be needed and will be identified as part of the development process.

Dust from unpaved roads is a major concern to the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan residents. Traffic on gravel roads raises dust from the road surface, which is a public health issue. In anticipation of this issue it is the desire of the residents that all roads within the planning area be paved to county standards as development occurs with the costs born by the developer.

### **PART 7: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Great care should be given when considering the location of these facilities. Future land use and transportation patterns will be influenced by these decisions. While various types of public facilities may be appropriate in almost every land type, problems can arise when they are located in close proximity to non-compatible uses. In addition to public roads, discussed in the previous section, public facilities necessary to serve Riverdale residents include police and fire protection, schools, parks, solid waste collection and disposal, and water and sewer facilities.

### **Fire Protection and Medical Services**

Riverdale is located within the West Valley Fire District. The nearest fire stations are located on Whitefish Stage Road, which is approximately 1.5 road miles away and on Farm to Market Road, which is approximately six road miles away from the planning boundaries of the neighborhood. Additionally, a new fire station near the intersection of Highway 93 and West Reserve operated by the City of Kalispell may provide protection to some of the land located in the neighborhood. West Valley, Evergreen, and Smith Valley county fire districts maintain a reciprocal agreement for servicing areas of the county, including Riverdale. Map 6 (Public Facilities) shows the location of nearby fire stations. The Silverbrook Subdivision has designated two lots to the City of Kalispell Fire Department.

The level of fire protection is defined by the size of the structures and intensity of development. Local jurisdictions have adopted the Uniform Fire Code and rely on the recommendations in the codes to define improvements needed for fire protection. Building Codes also contain building guidelines based on occupancy for construction and fire protection.

Riverdale is located approximately four miles north of Kalispell Regional Hospital. North Valley Hospital is located approximately six miles to the north. The neighborhood is located in the Kalispell Station Advance Life Support Response service area.

### **Schools**

Riverdale is served by three school districts: Kalispell #5, West Valley#1 and Whitefish #44. All districts offer elementary schools; high schools are currently provided in the Kalispell and Whitefish districts, and a new high school has been constructed in the West Valley area. Table 5 below provides the enrollment trends in these three districts between 1996 and 2005. Map 6 (Public Facilities) shows the location of schools within the vicinity of the neighborhood.

**Table 5**  
**School District Enrollment Trends**

School District	Kalispell #5		West Valley #1		Whitefish #44	
	High School	Elementary	High School	Elementary	High School	Elementary
Total Students (2005)	2494	2518	N/A	369	725	1197
% Change 1996 through 2005	6%	-3%	N/A	21%	10%	-15%

### **Schools – Future Projections**

At build out, school enrollment can be expected to increase by approximately 1,687 students. These students will be distributed to the school districts. Specific enrollment is difficult to determine, although on an average annual basis new school enrollment will be expected to increase by 84 students per year.

### **Solid Waste Facilities**

The Flathead County Solid Waste District encompasses the entire county. The county landfill is located immediately north of the neighborhood boundaries, and has recently undergone a sizable expansion. All properties are assessed a disposal fee based on use. As the neighborhood develops, the assessment would be adjusted annually to meet the level of service needed for

disposal of solid waste and maintenance of the central landfill. As the neighborhood develops, use of a contract hauler service may be used to transport solid waste to the landfill.

### **Storm Water Collection and Disposal**

The storm water drainage within much of the Riverdale neighborhood generally provides for overland flow to the Stillwater River and wetland areas located within the neighborhood. Storm water is collected in a series of swales, ravines, and wetlands. As the Riverdale neighborhood is developed, much of the on-site retention of storm water and infiltration can be accomplished through the use of dedicated open space creating permeable areas.

### **Public Drinking Water**

Separate public water systems serve the arena and the race track. The remaining properties are served with on-site individual well systems. As development occurs within the Riverdale Neighborhood, it is likely that those developments will create new public water systems to serve specific developments. At this time none of the large-scale public water systems serve the neighborhood; large-scale systems include those operated by municipalities or entire neighborhoods such as the neighborhoods of Bigfork or Lakeside.

It is intended that zone changes will occur when utilities are extended to a development parcel, or when the developer can demonstrate feasibility of providing utilities within a five year time frame. Higher density residential and commercial development will necessitate the creation of a community water supply or annexation into a municipal water district. Prior to zone changes, a safe and adequate water supply for development densities greater than one dwelling unit per acre will need to be demonstrated and ensured.

### **Wastewater Facilities**

Currently properties located within Riverdale are served by conventional on-site septic systems, the locations of which are shown in Map 8 (Existing Septic Systems). Additionally, there are two conventional, public wastewater systems within the Riverdale Neighborhood serving the arena and race track.

As Riverdale grows, and landowners within the neighborhood seek to convert land from agriculture to higher development densities, connection to a public sanitary sewer system is anticipated to be necessary. Two options appear to exist, at least to portions of the neighborhood. The first option is connection to the City of Kalispell's sanitary sewer system, which at this time requires annexation into the city, and thus withdrawal from the neighborhood. The second alternative would be to meet the standard requirements for public or private waste water treatment according to Montana Department of Environmental Quality standards. Wastewater treatment technology available today enables the development of public wastewater treatment plants at a much lower cost and requiring much less land than had been necessary in the past. Additionally, advances in individual on-site wastewater treatment allow residents of Riverdale to ask that new systems meet higher standards for treatment. It is intended that zone changes will be changed when utilities are extended to a development parcel or when the developer can demonstrate feasibility of providing utilities within a five year time frame.

On-site individual wastewater treatment systems will most likely be used on residential developments of greater than one lot per acre. Although some preliminary mapping of the shallow groundwater system shows higher groundwater along the Stillwater River well log data suggest groundwater elevations are acceptable for on-site septic wastewater processing and

disposal. The appropriateness of septic systems will be determined at the time of subdivision review.

### **Private Utilities**

Utilities that service the subject property include Century Tel, Flathead Electric Cooperative, Inc., and Northwestern Energy. Other services can easily be expanded for future development.

As is consistent with development currently underway outside of the neighborhood, future development within Riverdale will increase demand for local services. This plan includes policies to be sure adequate public facilities and services become available as new development is proposed. Residents of the neighborhood acknowledge that small areas within the plan may need to be designated for public facilities, including identifying areas for future schools, fire stations, and water and sewer treatment.

## **PART 8: PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

At the present time there are no public parks or recreational facilities in the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan area. The 240 acre conservation easement is dedicated to continuing agricultural production and is not available for public recreation.

### **Parks – Future Projections**

The Riverdale residents acknowledge the need for one or more areas to be dedicated for such uses as school sites and parks. The plan also envisions a trail system that will provide connectivity between residential and commercial areas, the public area(s), neighborhood parks, and limited access to the river corridor. A river access has been tentatively identified where Church Drive crosses the Stillwater River (See Map 7: Proposed River Access and Parks). To protect wildlife no other access points are delineated at this time. At the time of development additional water access will be addressed.

This plan recognizes the importance of park and recreation areas, as they improve the quality of the living environment and have numerous benefits, including economic, natural, health, and safety. Parks and trails encourage social interaction, facilitation and maintaining community cohesion and pride. A park site has been identified which will offer recreational opportunities for the planning area (Map 7: Proposed Riverdale Proposed River Access and Parks).

In addition to transportation routes available to motorists, it is a desire of the Riverdale residents and those who have commented during the planning process to establish bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails. At the time of development these trails will provide access to the natural amenities which characterize Riverdale, to allow for safe alternative transportation options, and to provide connectivity with adjoining existing or future parks, paths and trails.

## SECTION II GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies outlined in this section provide a basis for Map 9 (Future Land Use) and the implementation strategies discussed in later sections. Both the policies and the future land use map should be considered in determining appropriate land use developments.

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### General

**Goal A**      **Implement a comprehensive neighborhood plan by promoting development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, the natural environment, and that is well integrated with appropriate circulation systems, services, and facilities**

**Policy A1**      Encourage growth and development patterns to take advantage of existing and expanding infrastructure while protecting natural amenities and resources.

### Housing

**Goal 1**      **Encourage a range of housing types**

**Policy 1.1**      Permit townhomes, duplexes, and multi-family housing types in areas designated for mixed-use.

**Policy 1.2**      Permit mixed use structures that allow ground level neighborhood commercial and residential dwelling units on the upper level in the mixed use land use category. Each commercial unit/space shall count as a unit for density calculation.

**Policy 1.3**      Permit increased density in subdivision developments for which at least 15% of the housing/lots to be offered meet the definition of affordable.

**Policy 1.4**      Encourage community land trusts and non-profit housing agencies to promote and participate in permanent affordable housing.

**Policy 1.5**      Provide for a range of residential densities and housing types.

**Policy 1.6**      Encourage development of larger estate lots.

### Economic Development

**Goal 2**      **Neighborhood commercial centers to provide essential and convenient goods and services to residents in the valley and neighborhood plan area**

**Policy 2.1**      Neighborhood commercial areas should be no more than four acres.

**Policy 2.2**      Pedestrian and bike trails and the local road system should connect with neighborhood commercial to promote ease of access to these areas.

**Goal 3      General commercial development to sustain the viability of business operations within the Highway 93 corridor**

- Policy 3.1      Permit commercial business development within the corridor of U.S. Highway 93 as part of the Planned Unit Development process.
- Policy 3.2      Require site landscaping and architectural building styles suited to the particular site.
- Policy 3.3      Plan a 150 foot building setback with an average 50-foot landscaped and bermed beautification zone to be dedicated and planted along U.S. Highway 93. The landscaped zone will be dedicated at the time of development and the width shall depend upon lot size and shape, site design, topography, landscaping, and vegetation, among other site specific characteristics.
- Policy 3.4      Encourage creative and exceptional site design and landscaping plans.

**Land Use**

**Goal 4      Preserve the right and opportunity to farm**

- Policy 4.1      Recognize the impacts to adjacent agricultural lands due to new development and consider planting vegetative buffers, and consider installing signage to notify residents of agricultural traffic, and distributing information on living in an agricultural area. The Right to Farm Act shall be observed according to State Law.
- Policy 4.2      Encourage a transition area between residential development and active farming activities. The width would be dedicated at the time of development and depend upon site design, topography, landscaping, and vegetation, among other site specific characteristics. There may be exceptions to the transitional area width to permit a reasonable use of the property.
- Policy 4.3      Provide density bonuses for the use of subdivision design that preserves significant amounts of land designated for agricultural production.

**Goal 5      Residential, commercial, and open space and recreational land uses that are integrated and are efficiently served by local services and necessary public facilities**

- Policy 5.1      Permit a range of residential development densities and identify areas appropriate based on availability of local services, public facilities and physical constraints.
- Policy 5.2      Encourage cluster subdivision for residential development so as to preserve open space for recreation, habitat preservation, or agricultural uses.
- Policy 5.3      New developments shall dedicate a percentage of the gross site areas for open space at the time of development.

- Policy 5.4 Encourage creative residential and community design which incorporates development and connectivity of open space and trails.
- Policy 5.5 Encourage the creation of Planned Unit Developments (PUD).
- Policy 5.6 Require bicycle and pedestrian trails in residential development and promote connectivity within the neighborhood.
- Policy 5.7 Revise the Flathead County Zoning Regulations to include a new zoning district for one residential dwelling unit per 2.5 acres.
- Policy 5.8 Appropriately transition single family residential developments to higher densities close to commercial and mixed-use areas.
- Goal 6 Provide opportunities for low and medium density residential development**
- Policy 6.1 Residential developments shall be designed to reduce impacts from lighting pollution. Development should use “Dark Skies” lighting practices.
- Policy 6.2 When property is subdivided, the end lots located at arterial and collector roads should be part of the subdivision and be required to receive access from the interior of the subdivision. All subdivision lots shall access internal local subdivision roads.
- Policy 6.3 Large lot residential development of 20 acres or greater is an appropriate use within the Landfill Transition area and to five acres if within 1,320 feet of the landfill. If and when a zone change is requested for Residential Suburban (2.5-5 acres/du) within 1,320 feet of the landfill, it will be determined at that time whether 2.5 or 5 acres is appropriate.
- Policy 6.4 Use appropriate design techniques for blending different sized lot densities, such as larger lots adjacent to large lot subdivisions or smaller lots in proximity to commercial and mixed use developments.
- Policy 6.5 Encourage usable recreational/open space areas within residential developments to be located away from arterial and collector roads.
- Goal 7 Provide opportunities for mixed-use development within the Riverdale area**
- Policy 7.1 All higher residential development densities should be part of a mixed use project.
- Policy 7.2 Allow options for creative mixed-use developments which will provide a compatible mix of higher residential densities and commercial uses through innovative site planning.
- Policy 7.3 Intense mixed-use developments should be sited in proximity to U.S. Highway 93. All residential and commercial developments should be mutually supportive in the Mixed Use Development area and, neighborhood plan.

- Policy 7.4 Where mixed-use developments are allowed, encourage design techniques that will result in a project that is functionally integrated and visually compatible internally as well as with surrounding development.
- Policy 7.5 Mixed use developments should have a residential component to enhance the supporting compatible general commercial uses.
- Policy 7.6 Mixed-use developments should provide access onto collector roads and not local roads which pass through single family subdivisions.
- Policy 7.7 Requests for zone changes appropriate for the mixed-use land use area will be considered if accompanied with a request for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay. Once approved, the PUD Overlay will become the permanent zoning district.
- Goal 8 Provide opportunities for commercial and light industrial development in the designated Landfill Transitional area**
- Policy 8.1 Large lot residential development of 20 acres or greater is an appropriate use within the Landfill Transition area.
- Policy 8.2 Encourage light industrial, commercial and warehousing developments which are visually screened with landscaping adjacent to U.S.93 and buffered from the surrounding community.
- Policy 8.3 All development in the Landfill Transition Area should limit points of ingress and egress onto U.S 93.

### **Natural Resources & Water Quality**

- Goal 9 Preserve, and enhance the natural environmental resources, amenities, and features**
- Policy 9.1 Identify environmentally important areas, including the Stillwater River 100-year flood plain, wetlands and exclude development in these areas.
- Policy 9.2 Designate a transitional area along the Stillwater River extending an average of 100 feet from the flood plain on both sides and to be dedicated at the time of development. The width will be dedicated at the time of development and the width shall depend upon site design, topography, landscaping, and vegetation, among other site specific characteristics. There may be exceptions to the transitional area width to permit a reasonable use of the property.
- Policy 9.3 Designate a developmental transition area adjacent to wetlands to be dedicated at the time of development.
- Policy 9.4 Encourage connected open space which may include existing attractive or unique environmental features such as ponds, woodlands, meadows, wildlife habitat or other areas of mature vegetation worthy of preservation.



- Policy 9.5 Buffer strips designated to separate incompatible uses may be applied toward parkland acreages if there is positive recreational or open space value associated with the buffers.
- Policy 9.6 Corridors of open space shall be preserved at the time of development, and should create contiguous corridors.
- Policy 9.7 Public river access is considered an important amenity for future generations. At the time of development additional water based accesses shall be addressed.
- Policy 9.8 Protect wildlife habitat by limited access to the Stillwater River to discourage human/wildlife adverse impacts.
- Policy 9.9 Development should not disturb the natural banks along the Stillwater River.

**Goal 10 Protect and preserve the area's ponds and Stillwater River**

- Policy 10.1 Land adjacent to water bodies should be developed in a way in which the design and construction acknowledges the aesthetic considerations, environmental limitations and general fragileness of the area.
- Policy 10.2 Areas of 100-year flood plain areas along the Stillwater River shall be maintained in a natural state as parkland, wildlife habitat, or as open space/agriculture.
- Policy 10.3 Integrate storm water collection and retention systems as part of the open space landscape to prevent storm water runoff into the rivers and streams.
- Policy 10.4 There shall be no subdivided lot entirely within the 100-year flood plain.
- Policy 10.5 Open space areas may be used to collect untreated surface run-off in lieu of discharging to natural water bodies. Untreated surface run off into the Stillwater River shall be addressed at the time of development.

**Goal 11 Safe and clean sanitary and water supply for all residents free from threats of degradation and depletion**

- Policy 11.1 Encourage the use of community water and sewer systems to serve property within the Riverdale Plan.
- Policy 11.2 Encourage water systems that serve multiple developments.
- Policy 11.3 All on-site community or public sewer treatment systems should be engineered to hook into a municipal sewer system as it becomes available.

**Transportation**

**Goal 12 Safe and efficient traffic circulation on roads serving the neighborhood**

- Policy 12.1 direct accesses of private driveways onto US Highway 93 or arterial roads are prohibited.
- Policy 12.2 Subdivisions and developments shall be designed to provide connectivity in the neighborhood road systems.
- Policy 12.3 Minimize direct access points onto U.S. Highway 93. Additional approaches to U.S. Highway 93 are not appropriate.
- Policy 12.4 Support a frontage road adjacent to U.S. Highway 93 which provides access via Church Drive, with the exception of Majestic Valley Arena which will retain its existing approach permits.
- Policy 12.5 All roads within the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan areas shall be paved by developers to County standards as development occurs.
- Policy 12.6 Require bicycle and pedestrian trails abutting the frontage road.

#### **Public Facilities and Services**

**Goal 13 Maintain consistently high levels of public services and public facilities to the neighborhood**

- Policy 13.1 Identify areas for potential future development of one or more public facilities.
- Policy 13.2 Encourage the use of contract haul for solid waste disposal within commercial and residential developments.
- Policy 13.3 Subdivisions and developments shall be designed so as to encourage connectivity in the neighborhood road systems.

#### **Implementation**

**Goal 14 A neighborhood plan that addresses the needs and vision of the residents and landowners, is proactive in its land-use policies and provisions, and provides comprehensive planning policy for current and future growth**

- Policy 14.1 Review the neighborhood plan every five years, from its adoption, and make revisions based on changing neighborhood conditions, including character and demographics, and integrate input from neighborhood residents and stakeholders.
- Policy 14.2 Establish a Riverdale Land Use Advisory Committee to provide neighborhood input into the development of the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan.

## **Development Transitions**

### **Goal 15      A seamless transition which allows development while protecting existing land uses**

- Policy 15.1      Existing zoning and uses shall be maintained until such time when the property owners petition the County for zone changes.
- Policy 15.2      Permit commercial business development within the corridor of U.S. Highway 93 as part of the Planned Unit Development process. (Cross Over Policy, 3.1).
- Policy 15.3      Recognize the impacts to adjacent agricultural lands due to new development and consider planting vegetative buffers, and consider installing signage to notify residents of agricultural traffic, and distributing information on living in an agricultural area. The Right to Farm Act shall be observed according to State Law. (Cross Over Policy 4.1).
- Policy 15.4      Encourage a transition area between residential development and active farming activities. The width would be dedicated at the time of development and depend upon site design, topography, landscaping, and vegetation, among other site specific characteristics. There may be exceptions to the transitional area width to permit a reasonable use of the property. (Cross Over Policy 4.2).
- Policy 15.5      New developments shall dedicate a percentage of the gross site areas for open space at the time of development. (Cross Over Policy 5.3).
- Policy 15.6      Revise the Flathead County Zoning Regulations to include a new zoning district for one residential dwelling unit per 2.5 acres. (Cross Over Policy 5.7).
- Policy 15.7      Appropriately transition single family residential developments to higher densities close to commercial and mixed-use areas. (Cross Over Policy 5.8).
- Policy 15.8      Requests for zone changes appropriate for the mixed-use land use area will be considered if accompanied with a request for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay. Once approved, the PUD Overlay will become the permanent zoning district. (Cross Over Policy 7.7).
- Policy 15.9      Designate a transitional area along the Stillwater River extending an average of 100 feet from the flood plain on both sides and to be dedicated at the time of development. The width will be dedicated at the time of development and the width shall depend upon site design, topography, landscaping, and vegetation, among other site specific characteristics. There may be exceptions to the transitional area width to permit a reasonable use of the property. (Cross Over Policy 9.2).
- Policy 15.10      Designate a developmental transition area adjacent to wetlands to be dedicated at the time of development. (Cross Over Policy 9.3).

Policy 15.11 Subdivisions and developments shall be designed to provide connectivity in the neighborhood road systems. (Cross Over Policies 12.2 and 13.3).

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### SECTION III RIVERDALE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land use plans at a neighborhood scale provide a wealth of information on the type of land use and density of development appropriate for the future, the necessary infrastructure improvements needed to support these developments, areas to be preserved at the time of development including natural landscapes and areas that provide the opportunity for continued agricultural operations, and service areas including school, water and sewer, and fire districts. The following land use categories should be used along with all applicable goals and policies to assist in providing a guide for land use decision.

#### **Important Note:**

The areas designated on Map 9 (Future Land Uses) are intended to serve as general land use categories of planned land uses. Each category has defined densities or intensities of particular uses. These designations do not guarantee that a specific parcel or tract of land will be approved for a particular zoning classification, density, or intensity of land use in the future. Future zone change requests will be evaluated based partly on the existing and proposed infrastructure availability to meet impacts attributed to development.

It shall be the obligation of the developer to show, through sound land use planning practices and exceptional site and building design, that approval of a density or intensity up to the maximum is warranted. Designs for all land use categories should take into consideration the goals and policies of this plan and demonstrate compatibility with existing and planned adjacent land uses.

The Mixed-Use Land Use category requires a Planned Unit Development Overlay to accompany a request for any rezoning to a commercial, business or higher intensity residential zoning classification. This is intended to promote flexibility in site design and allow for alternative development standards contained in the subdivision and zoning regulations. The expectation is a superior site and building design.

#### **Conservation Easement**

A 240 acre conservation easement has been recorded just north of Church Drive. The purpose of the easement is to assure that the conservation values will be maintained in perpetuity and to prevent any use or activity on the property that will impair those values. The easement runs with the land. The easement area constitutes a valuable element of the natural habitat of Flathead Valley and its scenic, open space and ecological values. Primary uses on the easement include the continuation of agricultural and timber management activities. The easement allows for support facilities and one single family residence. No residential subdivision, commercial or industrial development is allowed within the easement area.

#### **Residential – Suburban (*from 1du/2.5ac to a max 1du/5ac*) (*Growth Policy Residential – Large Parcel*)**

The Residential Suburban land use category allows a range of one (1) single family residential dwelling unit per 2.5 acres to one single family residential dwelling unit per five (5) acres. This land use category is intended to promote low single family residential densities. Multiple family dwellings, commercial, industrial or mineral extraction land uses are not appropriate. Public

infrastructure and service availability affect the intensity and density within this land use category. Limited Agricultural uses are compatible within this category as well as local supporting public facility uses such as parks, fire stations and schools. Residential development within this category typically utilizes individual domestic wells and septic wastewater disposal systems. Single Family residential clustering and Planned Unit Development density bonuses are appropriate for this category. A maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acre lots is appropriate if located within 1,320 feet of the landfill. If and when a zone change is requested for Residential Suburban (2.5-5 acres/DU) within 1,320 feet of the landfill, it will be determined at that time whether 2.5 or 5 acres is appropriate.

The existing zoning district that is consistent with the Residential - Suburban land use category is SAG-5. This plan recommends that an additional residential zoning district be created to allow for one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres.

#### **Residential -- Low (1du/ac) (*Growth Policy Residential - Large Lot*)**

The Residential – Low land use category permits single family residential development at one (1) dwelling unit per one (1) gross acre. Multiple family dwellings, commercial, mineral extraction and industrial uses are not appropriate within this category. Public infrastructure and service availability affect the density and intensity of development. Residential development within this category typically utilizes individual domestic wells and septic wastewater disposal systems, however public or community water systems are strongly encouraged through site design. Local supporting public facilities such as schools, fire stations and parks are appropriate. Single family (detached and attached) residential clustering and Planned Unit Development density bonuses are appropriate in this category.

The R-1 and RC-1 zoning districts are consistent with the Residential-Low land Use category.

#### **Neighborhood Commercial – Light Business**

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category allows low density retail and service commercial uses that primarily serve local patrons and does not include more intensive general commercial characteristics. This would include neighborhood grocery stores, professional business offices, restaurants, gas stations, and other similar neighborhood retail and service uses.

Developments should be at a scale to serve the surrounding neighborhood and to enhance the community character. Mixed commercial-residential uses are appropriate when scaled to match the local character, such as second story apartments over businesses. Such areas should be developed as nodes around important intersections or existing focal points and not configured in a “strip” commercial pattern. Any development along a major roadway would be subject to county guidelines for highway corridors. Local supporting public facility uses such as schools, fire stations and parks are also appropriate uses in this category.

Existing zoning districts consistent with the Neighborhood Commercial – Light Business land use category include B-1, and CCC-1 zoning districts.

#### **Mixed Use**

The Mixed Use land use category is intended to provide flexibility in design and to promote a mix of commercial and housing options. This category permits retail and general commercial uses that serve the broader community and tourist economy. Mixed residential-commercial uses where the commercial portion is compatible with the residential is appropriate. This category

permits a range of commercial development such as hotels, banks, restaurants, professional office centers and a mix of residential use including apartment complexes, single-family attached and detached, duplexes, town homes, and accessory apartments at an average density of six (6) dwelling units per one (1) acre. Commercial developments should be configured as centers or nodes. Strip commercial configurations should be avoided. Development density in the Mixed Use land use category may be increased with the creation of community or public water and sewer systems or annexation into a municipal water and sewer district. Commercial development such as shopping malls or large box retail stores (e.g. Super Wal-Mart) is neither appropriate nor contemplated in this land use category.

All mixed use projects should be planned and processed as PUD Overlays and then hard zoned as a PUD. This plan recommends that new mixed use PUD zoning districts be created to facilitate combinations of commercial and residential land uses.

### **Park Facilities**

The Park Facilities land use category allows public parks and recreational areas such as public and private golf courses and regional parks and trail systems. It is intended that park and trail facilities be linked to residential developments and provide connectivity to promote leisure activities such as bicycling and walking rather than motor vehicle use.

### **Landfill Transitional Area**

Uses in the Landfill Transitional area category include uses compatible with and/or complementary to the continued operation and future expansion of the Flathead County Landfill. These uses include light industrial type development including warehouses, light assembly and manufacturing, high tech industrial businesses, and recycling processing plants and residential lots not less than 20 acres. Other residential development and high-traffic industrial/commercial uses are not appropriate in this category. However, an appropriate use within 1,320 feet of the landfill, but not in the Landfill Transition area, is single family residential with lot sizes equal to or greater than five acres. At the time of a zone change request it will be determined whether a five or 2.5 acre residential density is appropriate.

The zoning districts which are consistent with the Landfill Transition include agricultural (SAG-5, SAG-10, AG-20, AG-40) districts, Light Industrial (I-1H (except accessory apartments), and I-2).

### **Public Facilities**

The category includes governmental building sites and complexes, police and fire facilities, hospitals, schools and other uses considered public or quasi public such as libraries, churches and public utility facilities. The zoning district that is consistent with the Public Facilities Land Use category is P.

### **Agricultural Land**

Agricultural land use designates privately owned lands that will be primarily used for agricultural purposes. This use promotes the continuation of agricultural practices, including but not limited to, the growing and harvesting of crops, hay and grains as well as livestock production. Animal feedlots, horticultural plantations and nurseries, Christmas tree farms and other agrarian operations are all compatible with this designation, as is limited residential.

## **SECTION IV REVISIONS TO THE PLAN**

The development of any land use plan is an on-going and dynamic process. The various recommendations in this plan are based upon the vision of the neighborhood residents and landowners. As the socioeconomic character of the neighborhood changes, the needs and expectations of the residents as well as the opportunities and issues arising in the neighborhood may necessitate changes in the plan. All changes to this plan shall be consistent with the Flathead County Growth Policy.

As growth and development occur within the neighborhood and throughout Flathead County, the need to revise this document may arise. The existing conditions, and possibly goals and policies, detailed in this plan may need to be updated as the character of the neighborhood develops and progresses.

Some conditions which may trigger amendments or revisions to the plan prior to the five year review, include the following:

- The neighborhood plan no longer reflects the community's current goals and objectives.
- Existing characteristics of the neighborhood or portions of the neighborhood differ from the description in the neighborhood plan.
- Conditions have notably changed so that projected trends in land use, population, housing needs, economic conditions, local service, natural resources and water quality, or other elements are no longer accurate.
- Experience with using the neighborhood plan as a guide and implementing the neighborhood plan through regulations, and other measures may suggest the need to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the neighborhood plan.
- The plan becomes non-consistent with the Flathead County Growth Policy.



## **SECTION V RIVERDALE LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Riverdale Land Use Advisory Committee shall be established at the time of final adoption of this neighborhood plan as required by the Flathead County Growth Policy. The role of the Committee is to act as a liaison between the county offices responsible for addressing land use and development, and the residents of Riverdale. The Committee is responsible for providing recommendations to the county on proposals within the neighborhood plan area, and to provide an avenue for public participation. Recommendations from the Committee are based on assessing the proposals compliance with the Riverdale Plan and other applicable County and State regulations. The Riverdale Land Use Advisory Committee shall be comprised of five (5) Riverdale landowners, and include, at minimum, three (3) representatives of the agricultural interests within the planning area. Membership shall be appointed by the Flathead County Commissioners.

### **Other jurisdictional characteristics**

The southwest portion of the land within the Riverdale neighborhood, approximately 800 acres, is currently located in the West Valley Neighborhood Plan Area. The West Valley Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the Flathead County Commissioners in 1997 and covers approximately 47,000 acres. A formal request to withdraw this portion of land from the West Valley Neighborhood Plan and incorporate the area into the Riverdale Neighborhood is part of this master plan amendment request. The West Valley Land Use Advisory Committee recommended approval of the removal of this area from the West Valley Neighborhood Plan into the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan.

## **SECTION VI IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

The scope of a neighborhood plan is approximately twenty years, projecting growth and development to occur gradually over that period of time. The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan will be implemented over many years, and only as necessary supporting infrastructure and services are extended, improved, or created to serve an increasing neighborhood population. Each property owner has a vision for his or her land and a timetable in which that vision may be implemented. Change within Riverdale will be gradual, and many of those living within the neighborhood currently will continue to farm or use the land as they have in the past.

Extension or creation of new collector roads, sanitary sewer system, parks, trails, and possibly fire, school, or emergency medical service facilities may be necessary as the neighborhood grows to support development.

Implementation of the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan includes zoning regulations, flood plain regulations and subdivision regulations.

### **1. Zoning Regulations**

Zoning is an important tool in implementing neighborhood plans. Currently lands within the Riverdale Planning Area are located within Suburban Agricultural, Agricultural and West Valley zoning districts. Existing zoning remains in place and will continue to govern land use until such time that zoning is changed. It is intended that zoning will be changed as necessary to support development. Any infrastructure needed for the implementation of this plan will need to be identified and guaranteed to accompany zone change requests. The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan anticipates appropriate future land uses and development densities, serving as a guide to growth within the planning area. Future zoning within the neighborhood plan area are to be guided by this plan.

No zone change will occur without the permission of the land owner

This plan anticipates the creation of a new zoning district. A Residential district of one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres is absent in the Flathead County Zoning Regulations. The timing of the creation of this zoning district shall occur after the adoption of this plan. It is possible that the district may take some time to create. In the event that this district is not created the plan should be interpreted so the proposed land use categories can be implemented through existing zoning districts or regulations.

### **2. Subdivision Regulations**

The Flathead County Subdivision Regulations govern the subdivision of property. If land within the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan is divided, the County Subdivision Regulations govern road design, access, water and sewer services, parkland dedication, fire access and more. Flathead County, the local governing body, reviews subdivision applications pursuant to those regulations.

The County Subdivision Regulations, in conjunction with applicable County Zoning Regulations, govern the development of property in the Riverdale Neighborhood Plan, defining design standards and required impact mitigation.

### **3. Flood Plain Regulations**

Flood plain Regulations are required to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency. This program is available to communities that acknowledge that flood prone areas pose a significant health hazard and have met the NFIP criteria and program requirements. Flood plain regulations govern land uses and development in areas of a 100-Year flood plain. The flood plains within the Riverdale planning area have been mapped as part of this program. The value of participating in the NFIP is to ensure that low cost flood insurance is available for individuals who develop in 100-Year flood plain.

### **4. Appropriate Open Space Transitional Areas**

Deciding appropriate land use transitional areas, widths, and uses should take into account development densities and specific lot configurations adjacent to the water body or open space resources. Privately owned large lots greater than 10 acres may require a lesser transition to the open space due to minimized potential impacts. Conversely, high density and intensity development may require a larger transitional area to effectively protect the open space value. Covenants, setbacks, and architectural reviews are impact mitigation tools which would assist in establishing the appropriate transitional areas. Vehicular use should be prohibited and pedestrian use should be discouraged in designated wildlife corridors (See Map 4: Riverdale Environmental Features).

Designated open space with low-impact trails to be maintained and used by members of the homeowners' association may be totally appropriate uses in the open space.

Appropriate uses within the riparian transition areas will be dependent upon the particular property or site development plan.

### **5. Intergovernmental Cooperation**

The majority of the land within the Riverdale neighborhood is presently under the jurisdiction of Flathead County. Flathead County is a rapidly growing area, as discussed elsewhere in this document. The City of Kalispell's northern boundaries have extended north to Church Drive in the past year. As growth and development occurs within the Neighborhood, Riverdale residents will continue to coordinate planning with Flathead County and possibly with the City of Kalispell and the other cities in Flathead County on matters related to this neighborhood plan.

### **6. Land Use Transitions**

At the present time most of the land within the planning area is in agricultural production. As growth and development occur, the transition from agriculture to other land use types and intensities is an important factor in considering proposed land use changes. Consideration should be given to support continued agricultural activities, and other pre-existing land uses. Development within the planning area should have a positive or at least a neutral impact on existing adjacent land use activities. Vegetated buffers and transitional areas to separate land uses can have multiple positive benefits.

The Riverdale Neighborhood Plan will be implemented over many years, and only as necessary supporting infrastructure and services are extended, improved, or created to serve an ever increasing neighborhood population.

Future development should be tied to infrastructure availability. Infrastructure should be provided prior to the development, either on a planning area level scale or individually as part of the subdivision or development process. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, paved roads, water, sewer, schools emergency response services and parks.

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